scheduled commercial banks; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has informed that it has permitted select all-India Financial Institutions (FIs) raise resources by way of term money borrowings, certificates of deposit and term deposits. However, some of the FIs have been approaching the RBI from time to time, for increase in the limits for raising resources through these instruments. RBI has not found it feasible to accede to such requests from FIs.

Applications for Loans in Orissa

16. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for loan received from small scale industries by the Public Sector Banks in Orissa during the last three years and the amount sanctioned in that regard;

(b) whether banks are not providing timely loans to the applicants as a result of which these industries turned sick; and

(c) if so, the remedial action the Government propose to take in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) The data reporting system of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) does not generate information in the manner asked for. However, based on the returns submitted to RBI by the scheduled commercial banks, the number of sick small scale industrial (SSI) units and the outstanding credit in respect of these units in the State of Orissa as at the end of March, 1993 March 1994 and March 1995 was as under :

(Rs crores)

	Number of Sick SSI units	Outstanding Amount
As on 31st March, 1993	13930	70.79
As on 31st March, 1994	17235	74.50
As on 31st March, 1995	20498	68.99

(b) and (c). RBI has issued instructions to all scheduled commercial banks that applications upto to a credit limit of Rs. 25,000/- should be disposed of within a fortnight and those for over Rs. 25,000/- within 8-9 weeks from the date of receipt of application. Banks have also been advised that requests for increases in credit limits shoiuld be considered expeditiously and decision taken promptly and in any case within six weeks.

Dues against NTC

17. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the outstanding dues as on January 31, 1997 payable by the National Textile Corporation to all State Governments State-wise;

(b) the reasons for non-payment of dues in full;

(c) whether any time bound programme has been made to pay all dues in full; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) (a) to (d)The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Removal of Import Restrictions under WTO

18. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have recently removed import restrictions on a number of items as part of its agreement with World Trade Organisation;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) the impact on the indigenous industries dealing with liberalised items?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c) As a part of the on-going process of liberalisation of the import regime under the Export and Import Policy 1992-97, through the Ministry of Commerce's Notification No 23 (RE-96)/92-97 dated 10 February 1997, quantitative restrictions on products which span 70 eight digit tariff lines have been eliminated, and in respect of products which span 98 eight digit tariff lines the restrictions on imports were relaxed through the placement of such products under the Special Import Licence list. These items include office machines and equipment, air conditioning units, cosmetics, perfumes, and glassware, as well as parts and components used in the manufacture of specified consumer goods. It is too early to assess the impact of these measures on indigenous industry.

Items put under OGL from Special Import Licence

19. SHRI DINSHA PATEL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have recently shifted a number of items from Special Import Licence list to the Open General Licence (OGL) and from restricted list to the Special Import Licence list;

(b) if so, the details thereof, item-wise and the approximate duty the Government are likely to earn annually; and

(c) the impact on indigenous industries due to this change?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c) Yes Sir as part of the ongoing process of review of the Export & Import Policy, changes in the Import Policy of a few items have recently been made as per details indicated in Ministry of Commerce Notification No. 23 (RE-96) dated 10.2.1997, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library. As the notification has been recently issued, it would be difficult to make any assessment regarding annual duty likely to be earned by Government on account of import of these items or their impact on indigenous industry

Decline in Production and Export of Cashew

20. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are providing any assistance to the cashew producers in Kerala to boost Cashew export;

(b) if so, the total subsidy provided to cultivate cashew crops in Kerala during each of the last three years,

(c) whether there is any decline in exports of cashew products;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the remedial measures taken to boost exports during 1997?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Integrated Development Programme on Cashew, Rs. 3.728 crores have been released during the last three years for activities related to planting; re-planting/rejenuvation; adoption of comprehensive production technology and plant protection.

(c) and (d). The exports of cashew during the last three years were as under:

Year	Value (Rs. in crores)
1993-94	1045.31
1994-95	1241.97
1995-96	1231.07
1996-97 (April-Nov.)	932.22
1995-96 (April-Nov.)	818.20

There was a marginal decline in export of cashew during 1995-96 due to sluggish international market and stiff competition faced from our overseas competitors. However, during the current year the export of chashew has shown an upward trend.

(e) Measures taken to enhance exprots of cashew include: participation in international fairs abroad; arranging Buyer-Seller Meets, publicity campaigns in the overseas markets and dissemination of information on quality requirements of the overseas buyers to Indian exporters.

Fire in Jharia Coalfield

21. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state

(a) the latest position in regard to meet the hazard of underground fire in the Jharia Coal belt of Bihar,

(b) the expenditure incurred on fire-fighting in this belt during each of the last three years;

(c) the number of fire-spots extinguished during the last three years, and

(d) the number of fire-spots still emiting fire and smoke?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) Out of 70 fires identified in Jharia coalfield of Bihar at the time of nationalisation of coking coal mines in 1972, 10 fires have been completely extinguished. The remaining fires are by and large, under control.

With the objective of finding a long-term solution to the problem of Jharia coalfield fires, a detailed diagnostic study was undertaken under the Jharia Mine Fire Control Technical Assistance Project with World Bank Assistance. The study has been completed and report submitted recently.

(b) Year-wise expenditure on fire fighting including expenditure on the diagnostic study during the last three years has been as under:

Year	(Figures in crores) Total expenditure
1993-94	1.79
1994-95	6.02
1995-96	14.36

(c) Five fires in Jharia coalfield were extinguished during the years 1993-94 to 1995-96.

(d) Fire though under control still exists in 60 locations.

Production of Tea

22. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of tea gardens in the districts of North Dinajpur, Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling of West Bengal; and

(b) the total gardens of tea being produced by the authorised and un-authorised tea gardens in above districts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and